

Accountability Terminology

Academic review - A process for helping schools and school divisions identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement

Academic review team - A team that conducts an academic review

Accreditation denied - Accreditation rating given to a school when students achieve adjusted pass rates below those required to earn the “fully accredited” rating for the current year as well as the preceding three consecutive years

Accreditation withheld/improving school near accreditation - Accreditation rating given to a school that has never met the requirements to be rated “fully accredited” but meets certain criteria for increased student achievement and has applied to the Virginia Board of Education for a waiver to avoid an “Accreditation Denied” rating

Accredited with warning - Accreditation rating given to a school when students achieve adjusted pass rates below those required to meet the “fully accredited” rating. The rating includes the subject area(s) in which the school is deficient (Accredited with warning in English). A school can receive the “accredited with warning” classification no more than three consecutive years.

Achievement gap - Differences in academic performance among student groups

Adjusted pass rate - In calculating accreditation ratings, allowances are made for certain transfer students, students who speak little or no English, and students who pass retakes of tests after receiving remedial instruction. These allowances result in adjusted pass rates which are used to determine accreditation ratings.

AYP - “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) represents the minimum level of improvement that schools and school divisions must achieve each year as determined by NCLB.

Alignment - The correlation between Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL), what is taught in the classroom, and what appears on the SOL tests. Curriculum alignment ensures that students are taught the material subject to testing.

Alternative assessments - Tests of equal or greater rigor, such as Advanced Placement examinations, that may be substituted for SOL tests

AMOs - “Annual Measurable Objectives” (AMOs) are the minimum required percentages of students determined to be proficient in each content area

Assessment - A test or other method for measuring achievement

Conditionally accredited - Accreditation rating given to a new school for one year in order to allow for tests to be given. This rating may also be given to a school that is being reconstituted.

Corrective action plan - A plan outlining methods to improve teaching, administration, or curriculum that a school or school division classified as “in improvement” undertakes to improve student achievement

Disaggregated data - Test results sorted by groups of students. Groups include students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic groups, have special education needs, or have limited English proficiency. Disaggregated data allow parents and educators to see more than just the average score for a student’s school - it also shows how each student group is performing.

ESEA - “Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (ESEA) is the primary federal law affecting K-12 education. Congress reauthorizes it every six years. The most recent authorization is also referred to as the NCLB Act, approved by Congress in 2001 and signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002.

Expedited retake - A SOL test taken during the same academic year, and before the next scheduled test administration, by a student who, on his first attempt, scored within 25 points of passing or has exceptional or mitigating circumstances

Fully accredited - The accreditation rating earned by a school when students achieve an adjusted pass rate of 75 percent in third-grade and fifth-grade English, 70 percent in mathematics, and 50 percent in third-grade science and history/social science. Otherwise, the student results must meet the adjusted pass rate of 70 percent in each of the four core academic areas - English, mathematics, history/social science.

Graduation rate - Graduation rates for high schools and school divisions reported on the Virginia School Report Card include all recipients of any type of certificate or diploma (as well as students who have dropped out of or transferred into a high school) in the denominator and only those students receiving a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma (excluding students receiving a Special Diploma, Modified Standard Diploma, Certificate of Attendance, or GED certificate) in the standard number of years in the numerator.

Inclusion - The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms

In improvement - If a Title I school or a school division does not make AYP in the same subject area for two years in a row, the school or division is considered to be “in improvement” and is required under NCLB to take certain actions to raise achievement.

Instruction - The methods teachers use to teach students. These methods include lecture, discussion, hands-on activity, exercise, experiment, role-playing, small group work, and writing assessment.

LEA - “Local Education Agency” (LEA) is the term used by the federal education law to describe a local school division.

LEP - “Limited English Proficient” (LEP) refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not reading or writing English at their grade level.

NCLB - “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (NCLB), signed into law by President Bush in 2002

Other academic indicator - For AYP calculations, in addition to meeting AMOs in reading and mathematics, elementary and middle schools must also meet AMOs for attendance or science and high schools must also meet AMOs for graduation, or show improvement. School divisions must decide prior to the beginning of the school year whether to use attendance or science as the AMO for elementary and middle schools.

Parental involvement - The participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students’ academic learning and other school activities. The involvement includes ensuring that parents play an integral role in their child’s learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees. Parental involvement is one of the components of NCLB.

Public school choice - See “Transfer Option”

Reconstitution - A process that may be used to initiate a range of accountability actions to improve pupil performance, curriculum, and instruction to address deficiencies that caused a school to be rated Accreditation Denied which may include, but is not limited to, restructuring a school’s governance, instructional program, staff or student population

Restructuring plan - For Title I schools that move into year four of school improvement, this may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing staff relevant to the school’s failure to make progress, or turning the management of the school over to a private educational management company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness

Safe harbor - A provision of NCLB intended for schools and school divisions that are making progress in raising student achievement but not yet meeting target goals for AYP

SEA - “State Education Agency” (SEA) refers to the Virginia Board of Education, which is responsible for the general supervision of a state’s public elementary and secondary schools.

SIP - “School Improvement Plan” (SIP) outlines the improvement strategies and steps that a school will utilize to raise student achievement. A plan may involve new programs, more assistance for students, new curricula, and/or teacher training.

Scientifically based research - Research that involves the application of rigorous, systemic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge regarding the effectiveness of educational activities and programs

Supplemental services - Students in a Title I school identified as needing improvement for two consecutive years are eligible to receive outside tutoring. Parents can choose the appropriate services for their child from a list of state-approved providers. The school division must pay for the services.

SOL - “Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools” (SOL) describe the Commonwealth’s expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education.

Title I - Federal-funding program designed to help low-income children who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Title I funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those eligible for free lunch or reduced-fee lunch programs.

Transfer option - Also referred to as “Public School Choice.” Students in Title I schools identified as needing improvement have to provide the option for students to transfer within the division to a school that has made AYP. The school division is required to provide transportation to those students.